

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

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INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY ACCRA

AMCONSUL ASMARA

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY MONROVIA

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 4963

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR OAU ET XA

SUBJ: ETHIOPIA'S AFRICAN RELATIONSHIPS: CURRENT ISSUES
AND QUESTIONS

REF: ADDIS 4678

SUMMARY. IN CONVERSATION APRIL 24 WITH MOFA'S ACTING AFRICAN/MEDEAST
DEPARTMENT HEAD, LATTER CHARACTERIZED ETHIO-SUDANESE RELATIONS AS
COOLING; SAID THAT AN ETHIO-SUDANESE CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
WAS CURRENTLY SCHEDULED FOR EARLY MAY IN KHARTOUM; CALLED THE
RECENT EXTRAORDINARY OAU CM IN DAR "A GOOD CONFERENCE" FROM
ETHIOPIA'S STANDPOINT; SAID THAT NYERERE HAD REASSURED THE EPMG
ON TANZANIA'S SUPPORT; NOTED THAT FONMIN KIFLE IS CONTINUING HIS
EFFORTS TO EXPLAIN CHANGES IN ETHIOPIA AND EPMG'S VIEWS ON
ERITREA DURING HIS CURRENT TRAVELS IN WEST AFRICA; AND SAID
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THAT THE 26TH SESSION OF THE KENYAN-ETHIOPIAN CONSULTATIVE

COMMITTEE HAD SHOWN THE KENYANS TO BE SUFFICIENTLY CONCERNED WITH SOMALIA'S MILITARY PREPONDERANCE TO PLACE NEW EMPHASIS ON THEIR OWN MILITARY PREPAREDNESS -- A DEVELOPMENT WHICH ETHIOPIA COULD ONLY WELCOME. END SUMMARY.

POL COUNSELOR CALLED ON ASSEFA LEGESSA, ACTING HEAD AFRICAN AND MIDDLE EAST DEPARTMENT, MOFA, APRIL 24 TO DISCUSS SUBJECT. FOLLOWING DEVELOPED:

1. ETHIOPIA'S RELATIONS WITH SUDAN ARE CURRENTLY COOLING, ASSEFA LEGESSA SAID. VISIT OF SUDANESE CHIEF OF STAFF TO ERITREAN REFUGEE CENTERS ON SUDANESE SIDE OF ETHIOPIAN BOFDER RAISING EYEBROWS IN ADDIS, ALTHOUGH IT OF COURSE POSSIBLE THAT IT WILL PROVE "NORMAL" IN CIRCUMSTANCES, I.E. THAT NO PARTICULAR POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE NEED BE ATTACHED TO IT. THERE HAVE BEEN NUMBER OF INCURSIONS BY SUDANESE (UNSPECIFIED BUT PRESUMABLY POLICE) ACROSS BORDER INTO ETHIOPIA. ETHIOPIANS HAD NOTICED THAT CONTRARY TO EARLIER PRACTICE WHEN SUDANESE AUTHORITIES REQUESTED PERMISSION TO, SAY, PURSUE WANTED PERSONS INTO ETHIOPIA, THIS FORMALITY FREQUENTLY NOW BEING SKIPPED. TO BE SURE, ERITREAN DEVELOPMENTS NOT WITHOUT DIFFICULTY FOR SUDAN, AND MOFA PERHAPS OVERSENSITIVE. IN ANY EVENT, UPCOMING ETHIO-SUDANESE CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE MEETING IN KHARTOUM, WHICH FONMIN DUE TO ATTEND, NOW SCHEDULED FOR BEGINNING NEXT MONTH. IT SHOULD PROVIDE GOOD OPPORTUNITY FOR CLARIFICATION CURRENT STATE OF BILATERAL RELTIONSHIP.

2. EXTRAORDINARY DAR OAU CM HAD BEEN "GOOD CONFERENCE" FROM ETHIOPIAN VIEWPOINT. ETHIOPIA HAD GONE INTO CONFERENCE WITH PRIME OBJECTIVE OF DOING NOTHING TO ANTAGONIZE ANY OF THE FACTIONS CONFRONTING EACH OTHER OVER CURRENT SOUTHERN AFRICAN ISSUES. ETHIOPIA HAD, THEREFORE, SAID LITTLE. ITS REPRESENTATIVES CONSIDERED, HOWEVER, THAT CONFERENCE HAD COME DOWN ON SIDE "SOVEREIGNTY AND COMMON SENSE." NYERERE AND KAUNDA, ETC., HAD BEEN AUTHORIZED TO PURSUE WITHIN LIMITS EFFORT TO ADVANCE MAJORITY RULE IN RHODESIA AND INDEPENDENCE OF NAMIBIA BY DIPLOMATIC MEANS. GIVEN DISPARITY IN MILITARY RESOURCES BETWEEN RACIST REGIMES AND THEIR AFRICAN NEIGHBORS, THIS WAS COMMON SENSE APPROACH AND IT NOT EXCLUDED THAT FURTHER PROGRESS MIGHT RESULT. ALGERIAN FONMIN BOUTEFLIKA HAD TAKEN RATHER SHRILL
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AND FORWARD POSITION IN OPPOSITION. HIS EFFORT HAD NEVER ACHIEVED MUCH SUPPORT AND IT NOT CLEAR TO ASSEFA LEGESSA WHETHER BOUTEFLIKA HAD OPERATED ENTIRELY WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF HIS INSTRUCTIONS OR HAD ALLOWED HIMSELF SOME FREEWHEELING WHICH BACKFIRED.

3. ETHIOPIAN REPS TO EXTRAORDINARY OAU CM HAD ALSO HAD BILATERAL CONFERENCE WITH PRESIDENT NYERERE (CF PARA 3 ADDIS

3810). NYERERE HAD REAFFIRMED HIS GOVERNMENT'S UNDERSTANDING OF EPMG THESES ON ERITREA. NYERERE HAD TOLD ETHIOPIANS THAT ERITREAN PROBLEM HAD BEEN DISCUSSED IN TANU AND AGREEMENT REACHED THAT IT SHOULD NOT RPT NOT BE EQUATED WITH BIAFRA. ETHIOPIANS HAD LEFT REASSURED AND SATISFIED.

4. KAMPALA OAU SUMMIT MIGHT OR MIGHT NOT SEE ERITREAN PROBLEM RAISED "BY ARABS OR OTHERS." ETHIOPIAN FONMIN KIFLE WODAJO'S CURRENT WEST AFRICAN SWING IS CONTINUATION OF EFFORT TO EXPLAIN ETHIOPIA'S VIEWS ON ERITREA AND TO OBTAIN COMMITMENTS FROM AFRICAN GOVERNMENTS TO SUPPORT EPMG OR AT LEAST A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF ETHIOPIA'S ERITREAN PROBLEM. FONMIN WOULD MAKE SAME POINTS IN WEST AFRICA THAT HE HAD MADE DURING HIS RECENT EAST AFRICAN TRAVELS. ETHIOPIA WOULD HOPEFULLY GO TO KAMPALA WITH A GOOD DEAL OF AFRICAN SUPPORT. DEPENDING UPON THE TACTICAL SITUATION WHICH MIGHT DEVELOP THERE, ADDIS REPRESENTATIVES WOULD HAVE THE CHOICE OF CONTINUING TO TREAT ERITREA AS AN INTERNAL MATTER OR OF INSISTING IT BE HANDLED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CHARTER OF THE OAU. WHILE THE FIRST ALTERNATIVE IS PREFERRED, THE SECOND HAS AT LEAST THE ADVANTAGE OF MINIMIZING PRESSURES FOR BRINGING ERITREA BEFORE A LARGER FORUM SUCH AS THE UNGA.

5. ASSEFA LEGESSA, WHO PARTICIPATED, CONFIRMED THAT THE RECENT (26TH) SESSION OF THE ETHIO-KENYAN CONSULTATIVE COMMISSION HAD GONE WELL. THE KENYANS WERE PLACING NEW EMPHASIS ON THEIR MILITARY PREPAREDNESS IN THE FACE OF SOMALIA'S CAPABILITIES. THEY HAD TOLD THE ETHIOPIANS THAT GOK ATTENTION HAD BEEN FOCUSED TOO LONG ON ECONOMIC, COMMERCIAL AND INTERNAL POLITICAL FACTORS. GOK HAD DECIDED THAT IT NOW NEEDED TO BRING KENYA'S PRIORITIES INTO GREATER CONFORMITY WITH THE BALANCE OF PROBLEMS ACTUALLY CONFRONTING IT AT PRESENT. THE ETHIO-KENYAN DEFENSE AGREEMENTS HAD BEEN REVIEWED AND IT HAD BEEN AGREED TO CONFIDENTIAL

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WORK ON "COOPERATIVE MEASURES" IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THESE ACCORDS. HE WOULD NOT AMPLIFY.
HUMMEL

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